MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION

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INFORMAL CONSULTATIONS ON INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLE 6

Report of the Standing Committee of Experts on Victim Assistance, Socio-Economic Reintegration and Mine Awareness (SCE-VA) to the Second Meeting of the States Parties

I. Introduction

1. The Standing Committee of Experts on Victim Assistance, Socio-Economic Reintegration and Mine Awareness (SCE-VA), established in accordance with the decisions and recommendations of the 3-7 May 1999 First Meeting of States Parties (FMSP), met in Geneva from 15-17 September 1999 and from 29-31 March 2000.

2. At the First Meeting of States Parties, it was agreed in accordance with paragraph 25 of the final report of the FMSP and its Annex IV that Mexico (Ambassador Antonio De Icaza) and Switzerland (Ambassador Erwin Hofer) would serve as Co-Chairs of the SCE-VA, with Japan (Mr. Kimura) and Nicaragua (Ms. Cecilia Sanchez) serving as Co-Rapporteurs.

3. Representatives of 43 States Parties, 9 States that signed but have not ratified the Convention, 9 other States, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Department for Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA), United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), World Health Organization (WHO), Organization of American States (OAS), the International Committee for the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and from numerous other relevant organizations were registered as participants in the SCE-VA meetings.

4. The meetings of the SCE-VA received administrative support from the GICHD.

5. The final report of the Second Meeting SCE-VA containing background information, views, opinions, analysis and recommendations can be found at www.gichd.ch. Its reading is highly recommended.

II. Matters reviewed by the SCE-VA

6. At the first SCE-VA meeting six "Network Groups" were established to facilitate work in the following thematic areas: Collection and Dissemination of Guidelines; Information and Data Collection; Victim Assistance Reporting; Mine/Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) Awareness; Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs; and Donor Coordination. The deliberations and outcomes of the Network Groups were discussed at the second meeting of the SCE-VA.

7. Based on a spirit of partnership, shared commitment, and responsibility between civil society and governments, the SCE-VA discussed a comprehensive and integrated approach to victim assistance. The SCE-VA discussed a definition of "landmine victim" which includes directly affected individuals, their families, and mine-affected communities. In addition, the SCE-VA discussed "victim assistance" as multi-faceted, and requiring a broad range of activities including prevention, emergency medical care, physical and psychological rehabilitation and socio-economic integration. Also considered was victim assistance being defined as an integrated part of assistance to all victims of violence and trauma and persons with disabilities.

8. The SCE-VA discussed, with a view to guaranteeing a long-term sustainable solution, victim assistance being integrated in a broader context of post-conflict reconstruction and development strategies, without losing sight of the directly affected individuals, families and communities who are specifically targeted by the Convention. In particular, the SCE-VA considered the need to have victim assistance integrated into public health, community development, conflict and violence prevention. In addition, the SCE-VA considered the need to include measures relevant to meeting the needs of victims in the principles of humanitarian and development cooperation.

9. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, Nicaragua and Mexico agreed to facilitate the **Network Group on the Collection and Dissemination of Guidelines**. The main objective of the Network Group was to try to make existing victim assistance guidelines, including guidelines on socio-economic reintegration and mine awareness, available to all relevant actors. To achieve this objective, the Network Group: called upon all interested actors to contribute in the collection of existing guidelines; collected all existing victim assistance guidelines received; discussed how to disseminate the received existing guidelines; and discussed the need to disseminate a list with the collected guidelines and relevant information to interested parties.

10. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, Switzerland agreed to facilitate the **Network Group on Information and Data Collection**. The Network Group discussed a more systematic and reliable data collection and dissemination. Efforts were focused on base line data and quantifying the impact on public health and reintegration systems, on human and socio-economic development and on the daily life of people and communities. The Network Group emphasized that acquiring victim data should not be an objective in itself but integrated into broader efforts to prevent injuries, assist victims and to facilitate better allocation of resources. The Network Group raised issues like national ownership, capacity building, institutional development and adapting methodologies to reality in the mine-affected countries. The Network Group discussed providing mine-affected countries with methodological support rather than solutions, data collection being handled sensitively, and taking into consideration the impact of data collection on victims.

11. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, the ICBL and Handicap International agreed to facilitate the **Network Group on Victim Assistance Reporting**, the purpose of which was to

propose a voluntary reporting mechanism. The Network Group raised the issue that, while there is no explicit requirement in the Convention for countries to report on contributions to victim assistance and mine awareness, the Convention requires, in article 6, para. 3, that: "Each State Party in a position to do so shall provide assistance for the care and the rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims and for mine awareness programmes."

12. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, the ICBL and ICRC agreed to facilitate the **Network Group on Mine/UXO Awareness**. The Network Group confirmed that appropriate mine / UXO awareness can save lives, that problems faced differ in each situation, but some common elements can be found.

13. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, the ICBL Working Group on Victim Assistance agreed to facilitate the **Network Group on Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs**. The Network Group noted that mention of victim assistance in the Convention has led to a global upsurge of interest in these programs and that to date there is no global compilation of information on programming.

14. During the first meeting of the SCE-VA, Sweden agreed to facilitate the **Network Group on Donor Coordination**. The Network Group covered numerous issues of importance (e.g., recognizing that different states have different needs and understanding the need for both a comprehensive development approach to victim assistance and remembering that victims should not have to wait until macro-level problems are solved before they begin to enjoy a better quality of life) and identified several ideas for further consideration.

III. Actions taken or in process on the development of specific tools and instruments in order to assist the implementation of the Convention

15. The SCE-VA identified that a strategic, comprehensive and integrated approach to victim assistance is needed and made specific progress in the following areas: (*a*) towards efficient and effective means to monitor Article 6 obligations; (*b*) in the development, refinement and implementation of various programming and coordination tools; (*c*) in promoting an information exchange and discussion of various tools for data collection and mine awareness; (*d*) in promoting various sets of victim assistance and mine awareness guidelines; and (*e*) in better understanding matters pertaining to victim assistance data collection.

16. The SCE-VA developed a Portfolio of Victim Assistance Programs, the purposes of which are: to raise awareness among governments, donors, and program implementers on the range of activities that constitute victim assistance; to promote transparency among all actors in victim assistance; to highlight needs which have not been addressed because of lack of resources; and, to facilitate contact and information sharing among actors in victim assistance.

IV. Actions taken or in process to assist in the implementation of the Convention

17. Based upon the work of the Network Group on Victim Assistance Reporting, the SCE-VA recognized the importance of reporting by all States parties on support provided for victim assistance and agreed to continue work on effective and efficient means through which States parties could report on this matter.

V. Recommendations made by the SCE-VA

18. It was recommended that governments establish a mechanism or designate a focal point through which information on victim assistance guidelines could be channelled to appropriate actors in the field and to those elaborating victim assistance, socio-economic reintegration, mine awareness policies or programs.

19. It was recommended that governments, international and regional organizations, and NGOs interested or involved in victim assistance, socio-economic reintegration and mine awareness, take into account existing guidelines when developing victims assistance programs and promote a common culture based on the partnership of governments, international organizations, and civil society about their usefulness in the formulation of said programs. It was further recommended that ways and means should be found to translate these guidelines into the languages of mine-affected countries.

20. It was recommended that the WHO give due attention to enhancing and assessing the quality and performance of surveillance systems for victim assistance in affected countries.

21. It was recommended that governments, international organizations, and NGOs share their information at country level with the local bodies (e.g., inter-sectoral committees, mine action centres, health authorities, etc.) and make the information public. Governments of affected countries should be encouraged to establish victim assistance websites.

22. It was recommended that new incidents be covered by an adapted health information system producing simple and rapid information as well as by the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) and that further development of the IMSMA incident module be considered.

23. It was recommended that the WHO integrated surveillance system on victim and trauma be further developed and implemented in a gender disaggregated form.

24. It was recommended that a platform / clearinghouse for exchange, dissemination and information be established in order to promote transparency, in particular through: the collection and dissemination of standards, methodologies and questionnaires; the establishment of national platforms and linking them to the international level; the exchange of research; and, linking existing information about victims. It was further recommended that the GICHD assume this task and develop a test module accessible on its website. In addition, it was recommended that the WHO explore the possibility of engagement in this area.

25. It was recommended that the testing of various tools for victim assistance and mine awareness data collection be promoted.

26. It was recommended that all interested parties continue to work towards efficient and effective means to monitor the implementation of article 6, para. 3 of the Convention, taking into account the significant work of the Victim Assistance Reporting Network Group.

27. It was recommended that funding be timely, particularly with regards to displaced and returning populations, responsive, appropriate to specific country needs and circumstances, flexible, allowing for the changing reality at the field level, as well as geographically appropriate and coordinated at the donor level.

28. It was recommended that the UNICEF International Guidelines for Mine Awareness be taken into consideration at the outset of programming. It was further recommended that stake-holders should define, together with the mine action coordination body in the mine-affected country, the national standards and methodology for mine action.

29. It was recommended that guidelines be developed for monitoring and evaluating mine/ UXO awareness programming and training programs for mine awareness. It was further recommended that mine/UXO awareness training be integrated into national mine action frameworks.

30. It was recommended that UNICEF continue to provide an open and transparent process ensuring wide participation among mine/UXO awareness actors.

31. It was recommended that UNMAS ensure the integration of the various mine action guidelines into the framework for the development of international standards for mine action.

32. It was recommended that mine/UXO awareness coordination must occur whenever possible under a government umbrella, on various levels, including between: (*a*) Different implementing agencies involved in mine/UXO awareness programming; (*b*) The wider mine action community including victim assistance organizations; and, (*c*) The "non mine action" humanitarian and development sector, which can bring alternative solutions to mine problems encountered by the communities.

33. It was recommended that mine awareness programs be implemented in partnership with national mine awareness institutions and actors at the community, regional, and national level, from program identification and assessment, to implementation, monitoring and evaluation. It was further recommended that UNMAS be encouraged to develop a mine/UXO awareness function within the IMSMA to ensure the development of an integrated effective mine action plan and that mine/UXO awareness programming be responsive to both emergency and long term needs.

34. It was recommended that for the successful implementation of mine action programming donors/NGOs and all relevant stakeholders ensure that monitoring and evaluation are integral and meaningful parts of all programming.

35. It was recommended that key stakeholders ensure that agencies undertaking mine/UXO awareness activities have a knowledge of and commitment to the existing UNICEF International Guidelines and have ideally a proven capacity and track record of successful programming. It was further recommended that existing mine/UXO awareness agencies should ensure that key documentation is widely available and accessible as learning tools for other agencies.

36. It was recommended that government officials involved in victim assistance receive a copy of the Portfolio as a tool to facilitate contact with other victim assistance actors.

37. It was recommended that states parties provide resources for the creation and maintenance of a national coordination body, under whose aegis would fall the development of a national Portfolio of Victim Programs.

38. It was recommended that interested parties continue to work together to develop suggestions and recommendations on methods pertaining to more effective donor coordination and long term resource mobilization with the aim of effectively meeting the immediate and ongoing needs of victims. The focus of this process should be to identify gaps and available resources.

39. It was recommended that, in its future work, the SCE-VA pay due attention to the issues of: (*a*) coordination, with a focus on the clear and precise rationalization of the roles of the major actors in victim assistance; (*b*) identifying gaps in terms of financial, technical and other resources needed for victim assistance; and (*c*) measuring progress towards implementation of the Convention, particularly with a focus on examining victim assistance reporting mechanisms.

40. It was recommended that the future work of the SCE-VA should be divided into two types of activities: (*a*) operationalization of work already begun (e.g., following through on the most salient recommendations of the Network Groups; setting precise goals; and, collecting and disseminating documents from the SCE-VA); and, (*b*) analysis of new themes (e.g., creating an inventory of existing policies, studies, surveys and lessons learned; considering links between victim assistance and mine awareness and long-term strategies for sustainable development; and, increasing the participation in mine affected countries of civil society and, particularly, associations of mine victims and/or persons with disabilities.)

VI. Reference to supporting documents

41. As a result of the work of the SCE-VA's Network Groups, six papers were produced containing the views of these groups and the proposals put forward by them to the SCE-VA's March 2000 meeting. These papers can be found at www.gichd.ch.